

Get it Right!

Despite the evidence that most women work in today's economy, many still fail to plan for a career.

By Lecia Langston

Choosing a Career, not Just an "Until" Job

Until Jobs

I once heard it put this way: "Many women have 'until' jobs." What does that mean? They plan on working "until" they get married and have children. Then, they plan on working "until" they put their husband through school. Then, they plan on working "until" they pay for a new car. Then, they plan on working "until" they save enough for a down payment for a new house. You get my drift. Pretty soon, women have 30 years of "until" jobs that didn't pay very well, had few benefits, lacked retirement plans, or provided little satisfaction.

Here are a few facts:

- Most women who work are married.
- A higher percentage of Utah women work outside the home than the national average.
- Utah has a higher divorce rate than the national average.
- A young woman today can expect to spend more than 30 years in the labor force.
- Most women at one time or another will need to support themselves and/or their families.
- The majority of mothers of preschool children in Utah work outside the home.
- Choosing a career with a high wage will make it easier to combine home and family.
- Almost one third of female-headed households are in poverty.

Because most women see motherhood as their prime career, they fail to plan adequately for a secondary career in the workforce.

Choosing the "Wrong" Career

People are in the wrong careers due to a number of factors, says Richard Nelson Bolles, author of *What Color Is Your Parachute?*, the best-selling job-hunting book in the world:

- Nobody taught us how to choose a career.
- Many of us prefer to live securely as opposed to taking risks.
- We're heavily influenced by suggestions from friends who know even less than we do.
- We simply don't want to take time to figure it out.

For women, these factors are compounded because:

- We limit ourselves to a small number of female-dominated career options.
- We don't get enough education.
- We fail to recognize that we will spend a significant portion of our lives working for pay.
- We forget to consider wages in making a career plan.

Choose a "Career"

Thirty years (or more) is a long time. Take the time and the effort to choose a career that offers good wages (you can work less that way), good benefits, and lets you combine work and family. By the way, you might just want to choose a career that provides you with personal satisfaction and chance for growth.